



United States Air Force Museum

Public Affairs Division Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio 45433-6518
(937) 255-3286



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE MUSEUM FEATURES U-2 EXHIBIT

As America's most experienced U-2 pilot, Francis Gary Powers was chosen for a flight into central Soviet air space. His mission, called "Operation Overflight," was to photograph the test center at Tyruratam, and various industrial and military sites at Sverdlovsk and Plesetsk. Powers was scheduled to land nine hours after the flight in Bodo, Norway.

Approximately 1,300 miles within the border of the Soviet Union, a Soviet SAM 2 missile exploded near the fragile aircraft. Powers bailed out and was apprehended at a farm on the outskirts of Sverdlovsk. After three months of interrogation, he was put on trial and sentenced to 10 years in a Soviet prison. Two years later, he was exchanged for Soviet spy Rudolph Able on February 10, 1962. Upon his return home, he was extensively debriefed by the CIA and appeared before an open hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He was exonerated of any wrongdoing and shown to be a 'brave young man performing a dangerous mission.'

"Return to 'Glorie' Land" tells the story of the U-2 Incident and the man who survived it. The United States Air Force Museum is honored to present this display which exhibits a major event that changed the nature of the Cold War and relations between the United States and Soviet Union.

Artifacts are on loan through the courtesy of The Cold War Museum and the Francis Gary Powers family. Two photographs are from the Keith Milton Collection. Powers' commentary is extracted from his 1970 account of the U-2 Incident, his prison diary and secret journal.

The exhibit will be on display through August 31, 1998 in the Modern Flight Hangar. The United States Air Force Museum is located on Springfield Pike, six miles northeast of downtown. Museum admission and parking are free. For more information, please call (937) 255-4704, ext. 330 or 332.

NOTE TO MEDIA: For further information, please contact the United States Air Force Museum Public Affairs Division at (937) 255-4704, ext. 330 or 332.